THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) One.

(b) March, 2008.

(c) The policy adopted for taking up gauge conversion to carry out the conversion of lines at least cost yet providing a standard of service not lower than what the rail users were getting on the Metre Gauge covering the following areas:

(i) To take up conversion of lines to develop alternative broad gauge (BG) routes obviating the need for doubling existing BG lines on these routes,

(ii) To establish new BG links between stations connected by other BG lines.

(iii) To establish BG connection to ports, industrial centres and locations having potential for growth.

(iv) To take up conversion of lines required on strategic considerations.

(v) To minimize transshipment and to improve wagons turn around by avoiding delays at transshipment points.

Many new line and gauge conversion projects have been taken up on socio-economic considerations for development of backward, hilly, remote and under developed areas.

Connecting Lumbini by train

2111. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the action taken by his Ministry to connect Lumbini, the Birth Place of Lord Buddha by train;

(b) what action taken by his Ministry on letter dated 18th May, 2006 from M..P: Rajya Sabha; and

(c) whether the Extemal Affairs Ministry had called for the comments of his Ministry on the above matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Lumbini is in Nepal and not connected by Indian Railway system.. Five surveys which have been conducted on behalf of Ministry of External Affairs, to have rail connectivity on bordering towns of Indo-Nepal border do not cover Lumbini. The matter has been referred to Ministry of External Affairs for their comments.

Captive power plant

2112. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the average annual requirement of electricity of the Railways;

(b) the charges of electricity for operation of trains per unit;

(c) whether the Railways has decided to set up a captive power plant in collaboration with NTPC to get power at cheaper rates;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether these proposed power plants would meet requirements of other departments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The average annual requirement of electricity of the Railways for the year 2005-06 was 12,705 Million Units (approximately).

(b) The average charges of electricity for operation of trains (traction) for the year 2005-06 was 422 paisa per unit and the average charges of electricity for other than train operation was 424 paisa per unit.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Railways are establishing a captive power plant of 1000 Mega Watt (MW) capacity at Nabinagar, district Aurangabad, Bihar in collaboration with NTPC Limited. This has been included in Railway Budget for the year 2007-08.

(e) 10% power from this power plant will be earmarked to other users.

Bullet train

2113. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal of the Railways to introduce bullet trains would materialize soon;

(b) if so, by when;

(c) what could be the maximum speed and the probable routes of these trains; and

(d) while doing so, whether enough safety measures of tracks and passengers would be ensured?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. During the Budget speech 2007-08, it was announced that Ministry of Railways will conduct pre-feasibility studies for construction of high speed passenger corridors, equipped with state of the art signaling and train control systems, for running high speed trains at speeds of 300 to 350 kms. per hour; one each in the Northern, Western, Southern and Eastern regions of the country. Pre-feasibility studies shall be undertaken.

(b) It is expected that the pre-feasibility study shall take about two years.

(c) As per the Budget Speech, the proposal is to do pre-feasibility studies for running High Speed Trains at a speed of 300 - 350 km./hr. Probable routes are yet to be decided.

(d) Yes, Sir.